

## \* Special Papers. \*

\*THE IMPORTANCE OF MAKING  
"HISTORY" INTERESTING TO  
OUR PUPILS.

PERHAPS there is nothing taught in the Common Schools regarding which it is more necessary that the teacher should have a thorough grasp of the subject than in the case of history. From the necessity for compressing a large amount of information into comparatively small space, the textbook on this subject is, must be little more, than a dry statement of facts. To supplement this the teacher should cultivate in himself the ability to present these facts, and the attendant circumstances, with such vividness as to hold the attention of the class. And to do this he should *study* the subject, looking at it in all its bearings, endeavouring, as far as possible, to judge of each historical personage according to the simple facts, not allowing his judgment to be warped by the manner in which these facts are recorded. I would recommend a critical reading of all the histories within reach, noting how that of the sceptic fails in its sneer at the truth "as it is in Jesus." Hume, when speaking of the furious and disorderly behaviour of the multitude engaged in the First Crusade and the way in which all was changed into humiliation and contrition at the sight of the spot made sacred by our Saviour's resurrection, terms this changed demeanor "effeminate superstition." But to us whose hopes are all sustained by that death and resurrection, it seems but another proof of the softening and purifying effect of the thought of Christ. And then we must not allow national prejudice to obscure our intellectual vision. Neither the political nor the religious differences of the various historians should prevent us from harmonizing all the details. We must also make ourselves well acquainted with the manner and customs of the times in which those whose doings we are studying lived, that we may be able the more clearly to portray the different characters in such a way that they may, so to speak, step down from their places as mere portraits on the walls of memory and become, in imagination, real, living actors. We must be able to show the connection between events in times ancient and other events in times modern, as, for example, the steps by which the England of 2,000 years ago became the England of to-day. When teaching ancient history, we should make clear to the pupils the wonderful results which are the outcome and development of the comparatively insignificant acts of our semi-barbarous ancestors. In the reign of each sovereign we should try to bring out in strong relief the character of the individual on the background of the times in which he lived, pointing out how the historian's estimate of character must, to some extent, be guided by the spirit in which the records to which he is indebted for his information were made.

I think it is Edwin Paxton Hood who

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says that the bare facts of history are like the dry bones of a skeleton. The task of the teacher, then, is to clothe these dry bones with that which, to the mental eye of the pupil, shall give them life and reality. He must enlist their sympathies in the cause of the oppressed. He must so picture before them the march of intellect and morality, and the spread of gospel knowledge, that they may in the history class receive impressions that shall remain when they go forth to take part in the work of the world. From the revolutions and insurrections that have convulsed portions of the world, they may learn how terrible are the effects of power abused, first on the victims and finally on the despots, when the tide has turned and swept oppressed and oppressor to ruin. He must show how the angry passions of the people, let loose in insurrection, destroy them in the end. And he should aim at keeping ever before their minds the fact that there is One on high overruling all for the good of His creatures, and show that in some cases we can clearly see *how* good was finally brought about from seeming evil, for instance how the mean and tyrannical conduct of the worst tyrant that ever disgraced the Annals of English history drove the barons to take measures that resulted in what has justly been termed "the foundation of English liberty."

We must further be careful to leave no word or term unexplained. There are usually so many expressions used in history which are seldom heard in ordinary conversation, or met with in the publications chiefly read by our pupils, that we must be constantly on our guard lest some of the words pronounced so glibly in answer to our questions convey no more information to the mind of the speaker than would a Hebrew rendering of the same passage. The fact is that we must ourselves, with the Junior class at least, state the facts in the simplest language possible, and I think this should be done (after the lesson for the day is concluded), in assigning the next one, that the class may the better take in the meaning of the text given them to study. It is well, also, to point out the most important events recorded, that the preparatory study may place these facts in the central position in the mental picture, grouping the other facts around them and thus avoiding the danger of a jumble of facts and dates.

I think that we teachers should strive to make ourselves thoroughly acquainted with at least the history of every country in Europe and North America. Indeed, the histories of all nations are so intertwined, that we cannot rightly teach the history of our own, or the mother countries, without a tolerably full knowledge of the rest. And let us try to make our pupils familiar with the struggles for political and religious liberty, and thus enlist their sympathies on the side of right, of benevolence, of truth, and of Christianity, thereby fitting them for the places awaiting many of them in the arena of life.

BRUCE MINES, ALGOMA.

It is clear that in whatever it is our duty to act, those matters it is also our duty to study.—Arnold.

## Primary Department.

## DRAWING.

RHODA LEE.

THE utility of drawing as a "graphic language" is now being more fully realized by our primary teachers. Drawing finds its way into almost every lesson on our programme. Language, object, geography and reading lessons, all receive added interest and usefulness from it, and we should suffer an indescribable loss were we compelled to confine our drawing to the hour, twice or thrice a week, which we devote to the mere tracing of simple designs in the Kindergarten or other drawing books.

Elementary drawing comprises, in the first place, the study of all such simple forms as the square, cube, sphere, cylinder, cone, etc. Such terms as vertical, perpendicular, oblique, parallel and others, should be familiarly and frequently used as being quite within the grasp of any ordinary child. Before leaving the subject of form let me suggest that you encourage the children to look on the streets and at home, for forms similar to the one just studied, and if possible bring them to school that they may be observed by all.

Connected with form-study, is modelling. Clay modelling is out of the question in the present state of affairs in our junior classes, but other substances may be used, and with great advantage. A handful of lentils, linseed or any other fine grain, placed on the slates will be a preparation for a delightful half-hour. These little heaps may with skilful fingers be fashioned into leaves, birds, nests, hats, umbrellas and other equally simple forms.

The invaluable shoe-pegs are another great help in drawing. I have urged the usefulness of these so often as to make it quite unnecessary to do more than mention them. Some day, for variety, make with the pegs objects seen in the school-room—tables, chairs, black-board, picture-frames, windows, doors, stove, etc. Another day visit the kitchen, the parlor, the street, the church or some well-known store in search of objects. When the form has been outlined with the pegs, someone may make a drawing of it on the black-board, or all may copy it on their slates. Drawing may generally form a part of the object-lesson also, but we will talk about that at another time.

To-day there is one species of drawing to which I wish more particularly to direct attention. It is not form-study, nor modelling, nor geometric drawing in books, which should, as quickly as possibly, take the place of slates, but it is what, for want of a better name, I call *picturing*. Let me instance by telling you of a "morning-talk," I both heard and saw in a first-book class, some time ago. It was a few days before the close of the short term and the teacher was telling the old, old Christmas story of the birth of our Saviour. When in the course of the story, reference was made to the shepherds watching their flocks on the lonely hill-side, the teacher asked a child to come to the board and